

REVIEWS.

Our Natural Resources and their Conservation. By A. E. Perkins and J. R. Whitaker. (John Wiley & Sons., Inc. New York; Chapman & Hall, Ltd., London), 1936. Pp. 650. Price 25s.

We have read this book with great profit. The amount of information presented to its readers is almost encyclopædic in range, and every chapter bears the stamp of authority. The co-operative plan on which the book is based has secured for it the positive advantage of a general survey of the entire field, so essential in advancing and familiarising the educational section of the conservational programme. Twenty-two authors have contributed and the joint authorship has rendered the work far more authoritative than a single author could have made it. In a symposium of this magnitude, there is bound to be duplication of material, contradictory individual opinions and differences of view-point both as regards state policies and facts. Instead of being shortcomings, they have invested the book with excellent special features in respect of the conservational theory and practice. Co-operative authorship is becoming a leading feature of most modern books which attempt to deal with a wide field in which the view-points and contributions of the administrator, field worker, scientist and philosopher could be blended into a systematic and comprehensive treatise.

The book expounds the achievements of the American Government and the local bodies in conserving the natural resources of the United States and the early recognition of the fact that the wealth of the country is a national asset which ought to be protected and utilised for the benefit of the whole population has resulted in the formulation of several restrictive laws in whose administration several associations co-operate. It will be recalled that in 1908, President Theodore Roosevelt summoned a Conference at the White House at which, in a remarkable speech, he emphasised the great need and importance to the nation, of conserving the natural resources and of properly using the variety of gifts with which nature has endowed the American people. The delegates who attended the Conference were so

impressed with the importance of the problems presented that they drew up a set of supporting resolutions and expressed their determination of appointing State conservation Commission in their respective states. The policy enunciated at this Conference, supported by public opinion, has been the foundation of a nation-wide organisation throughout the country for a close and scientific survey of all the national resources and of a judicious programme for their economic utilization for the people's welfare and prosperity.

This book has a special interest to Indian administrator, scientist and man of public affairs. This country presents a singularly unfortunate spectacle of vast resources on the one hand and starvation and poverty on the other. India has not recognised that the problems of conservation—wise and safe utilization—of her potential wealth are vital to every individual. We have hardly projects and programmes—except some spasmodic efforts—applicable to the particular resource or group of resources. The time is opportune. The autonomous provinces should establish commissions for the investigation of the national wealth and draw up plans and programmes for its development and utilisation. Conservation does not imply the care and preservation of the forests and woodlands only, but in the widest acceptance of the term embraces problems relating to recreational and historic sites, the maintenance of the fertility of soils, the prevention of soil erosions, the control of floods, the careful mining of metals and of fuels, the protection of wild life including the fish of the fresh waters and of the sea, the preservation of the primitive beauty of the landscapes, the conservation of human life and culture of the nation. The spirit of conservation is not part of the composition of the public opinion in India and unless it forms an integral part of the national administrative policy, India must have undeveloped wealth and widespread poverty as inseparable twins of her national life. The first step towards developing and expanding our resources, is an intelligent and critical appreciation of

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